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IN THE NORTH AMONG THE HERRINGS.

THE herring-fishery of Scotland presents aspects so picturesque and exciting, that from our own personal observation and experience, we would cordially recommend a view of its doings to the used-up: to any Sir Charles Coldstream, dying for a new 'sensation,' we would at once say: 'Go to Wick!' Although there are other large fishing-stations both in Scotland and England, such as Dunbar and Yarmouth, Wick is the true herring metropolis, the place where this capital fish with its belongings is the one staple article of commerce, and where, during the season, a nightly fleet of about twelve hundred boats, upon which some ten thousand human beings are dependent, proceeds to sea to engage in the lottery of herring-fishing. Both at Dunbar and Yarmouth, there are large fleets engaged in the fishery; but these places having been caught in the network of our railways, the produce of their boats is rapidly whirled away, fresh from the bosom of the deep, to the mighty metropolis. It is at Wick alone we can see the process of the *cure* in all its completeness; and here we find other sights and sounds of interest and excitement besides the herring drave and the death-cheep of the fish.

On the sea-beaten cliffs that frame the coast, are traces of mighty convulsions of nature, and striking geological phenomena stud the shore. Further north, and easy of access from hence, there are the wonderful islands of Shetland, the primitive home of a primitive people, a hundred and fifty miles from the mainland, and nearly a thousand from London. And there, far away in the living waters of the North Atlantic, are to be seen men who perform wondrous feats on the face of the rocks—fowlers who peril their lives for the sake of a few eggs or a handful of feathers. Let the *bliss* Sir Charles bowl over to Shetland, and view men hanging to the slippery and crumbling rocks by their toes and fingers, the ravening waters surging hundreds of feet below them, and the mighty eagle flapping his wings round their head: and then let him say, if he can, 'there is nothing in it.' Some gentlemen who possess yachts have the pluck to venture among the icebergs of the high latitudes; and there are hundreds who annually 'do' the fords of Norway, the isles of Greece, the Mediterranean, and Mount Vesuvius: but there be few who know thoroughly our own land of the mountain and the flood, its scenery and employments; who have fished for piltachs in Shetland, or fowled on lone St Kilda, ay, or seen Wick in the herring-season.

Of the many chapters which compose the romance of natural history, there are none more interesting

than those which treat of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the great deep. It was only the other day our *savans* decided the parr question, a well-known branch of the great salmon controversy; and now we are in the very midst of speculation as to the natural history and proper *habitat* of the principal member of the *clupea* family. Only a few years ago, we still believed in wonderful theories as to the sources whence we were supplied with this multitudinous fish. We took it for granted, that the herrings were natives of far-away seas, and generated amid the icebergs of Greenland; and that, leaving their frozen home, in one gigantic shoal of hundreds of millions of fish, they turned their snouts to the south, and reaching Britain, delivered themselves up for the benevolent purpose of feeding the people of these islands. Even now, we know little more than this: although we suspect the herring to be a native of our own seas—that it comes into shallow water at certain seasons to spawn; and, having fulfilled this great purpose of nature, that it again retires to the nearest deep water. It is at this period we commence our onset; the 'full fish' being the most esteemed in the market; and here we must notice the strange anomaly, that during the spawning season we protect our salmon, and avoid all kinds of white fish, which is precisely the period we choose for rushing upon the herrings, and destroying them in myriads.

As an instance of the very limited knowledge we possess of the natural history of even our most favourite fishes, we may state that at the recent meeting of the British Association, a member, who read an interesting paper 'On the Sea-fisheries of Ireland,' introduced specimens of a substance which the Irish fishermen considered to be the spawn of the turbot; stating that wherever this substance was found, trawling was forbidden; the supposed spawn being in reality a kind of sponge, with no other relation to fish except as being indicative of beds of mollusca, the abundance of which marks that fish is plentiful. It follows that the stoppage of the trawl on the grounds where this kind of squid is found, is the result of sheer ignorance, and causes the loss in all likelihood of great quantities of the best white fish.

We have called the herring-fishery a lottery, and it will presently appear how it deserves this character. Some years the take is very large, and at other times it does little more than pay expenses. The present season has been considerably under the usual average at all the stations in Scotland. This, coupled with the fact of many places being now barren of fish that in former times yielded a good supply, has given rise to an opinion that we are killing our goose with the

golden eggs. The originator and principal advocate of this view is Mr John Cleghorn, who, being resident in the place where our greatest fishing is carried on, has had the most ample opportunities for observation and research. The points of Mr Cleghorn's doctrine are the following: 1. That the herring is a native of the waters in which it is found, and never migrates. 2. That distinct races of it exist at different places. 3. That twenty-seven years ago, the extent of netting employed in the capture of the fish was much less than what is now used, while the quantity of fish caught was, generally speaking, much greater. 4. There were fishing-stations some years ago which are now exhausted; a steady increase having taken place in their produce up to a certain point, then violent fluctuations, then final extinction. 5. The races of herrings nearest our large cities have disappeared first; and in districts where the tides are rapid, as among islands, and in lochs where the fishing-grounds are circumscribed, the fishings are precarious and brief; while, on the other hand, extensive sea-boards having slack tides, with little accommodation for boats, are surer and of longer continuance as fishing-stations. 6. From these premises it follows that the extinction of districts, and the fluctuations in the fisheries generally, are attributable to overfishing. In 1818, with 2,000,000 square yards of netting, we caught 116,000 barrels; and this year in Wick, with nets to the amount of 22,000,000 square yards, we have only some 82,000 barrels. Upon the whole, Mr Cleghorn's statements deserve attention; and under present circumstances, the controversy may be expected to go on with warmth. 'Herrings,' says one of the belligerent journals, 'will very soon be as rare a fish as the salmon, and found only on the tables of the wealthy.'

The information which even our most intelligent fishermen can impart as to the natural history of the fish is so scanty, as to be of no practical value. They go out in their boats to catch them, not to observe and note their habits. Of course, they have in general acquired a certain knowledge of the places where their prey most do congregate; but even in this respect, the falling in with the shoal is quite a chance affair. The usual mode of determining the whereabouts of the fish is very primitive, consisting principally of observations as to where the gulls are roosting. If these are found high on the rocks, then the herrings are supposed to be out at sea; if, on the other hand, the birds are low down, or at the water's edge, then the shoal is thought to be close inshore. However, our business for the present is with the actual *modus operandi*, and a night or two at sea, and a long and interested gaze at the land operations, have made us somewhat familiar with the subject.

It was about half-past four when we left the harbour of Wick, a little speck upon the waves, dancing along with 1100 other little specks, all on the same errand. When we got fairly out of the harbour, the question was how to turn, to the east or the west; after a consultation, we bore away to the right hand—why I cannot tell—our brown sail well filled, and our boat in full career before the spanking breeze. Soon we passed the little harbour of Sarclet; and in about an hour and a half were off Lybster, streams of boats pouring like bees out of both of these places. Tacking about, we made a run back to what we thought a suitable place; and as the sun in gilded majesty was retiring into the bosom of the waters, we commenced preparations for the shooting of our nets. A few cautious persons were still rowing anxiously about, not inclined to be at the trouble of shooting till they saw whether or not their neighbours were

rewarded with fish; but most of the others had taken up their stations, and their partially furred sails denoted that the great business of the night had commenced: in these the men having crept under the sail, were already comfortably asleep, their boats drifting with the tide, and their trains filling rapidly with the glittering treasures of the deep. Now it became our turn; and having selected a spot—a rather difficult task amid the crowd of boats—we commenced our labours. Away flew net after net, over the side, till a train was formed, like some great sea-serpent, floating in our wake—the corks and bladders dancing up and down almost as far as the eye could reach; in fact, our train must have been fully a mile long—and on that night there could not have been less than 1000 miles of netting floating around us. Having hauled down our sail, we waited patiently for some token of success; but wearied at last, after an interval of about four hours, we hauled our nets, and were rewarded with one solitary fish! Although much disheartened, we resolved to try again; but before doing so, we pulled up and down among our neighbours, peering into their nets, to ascertain whether they had been more fortunate. At last we found some with fish in them; and again we threw out our marking-buoy—over went the first sinker, and away flew the net, breadth after breadth, till again our whole train was floating far upon the sea. Fortunate neighbours were by this time hauling in and filling their boats with herrings. Hark! in the distance there is a mighty noise, as if ten thousand thunder-showers were rattling down on the ocean; and see, the distant flashing of the waters—they are bright with light, and vivid with life—for a 'spot' of the herring-shoal has risen to the surface, and the waves are flashing in their brilliant phosphorescence. A stone is thrown from a boat right into the centre of the fiery tumult, and in a moment the spot has disappeared; the light has vanished, and the waters are again dark and still. It was a brief but beautiful sight; an ample reward of itself for the night's labour.

Not one of us had spoken during this little scene, but at last one of the Harris people, taking the pipe from his mouth, exclaimed: 'Och, och, but she'll get plenty of fish the next haul!' And he proved to be a true prophet. At the next haul, we had great luck, and the fish came splashing over the side of the boat as thick as hailstones. It took us two good hours to haul in the nets, and then we had time to look round, and observe the operations of our neighbours. The sea for miles around was one mart of industry; and as the early village cock in distant barn-yards was proclaiming the advent of morn, the fleet was on the move, and all making harbourwards. Some, high out of the water, took the lead, and dashed gallantly home with great rapidity—empty. Others, deep sunk in the sea, heavy laden with their miraculous draughts, crept slowly along, joyously dipping an occasional oar to speed them on their way. Such were the results of the Lottery. The herrings, it would appear, do not swim in an unbroken mass, but in tribes or nations—or at least in regiments and divisions—and the luckless boat between any two of these aggregations, fishes only the empty waters. One of our neighbours had not even a single fish, whilst another, more fortunate, was laden to the gunwale. About six o'clock, we made the harbour, and found hundreds of boats already berthed, and commencing operations for landing their freight.

We are now at a point where the herring ceases to be an object of natural history, and becomes an article of commerce; and we must, as we have said, resort of necessity to Wick, in order to see all the business operations of the fishery brought into a focus. Here, during the heat of the season, that is, from the end of July to the first week in September, when the local fishermen

are assisted by hired hands, are congregated all who have an interest in the fishing; and the *coup d'œil* is full of animation. The herring fleet, when the weather is favourable, begins to move out of harbour about four o'clock, and, as it is some hours before the whole fleet are dispersed on the waters, before this is accomplished perhaps some are already returning laden with fish. And again, it sometimes happens, that as the last boats are coming in, those who like to start early are pushing away for a new campaign. From six o'clock A.M. till about three in the afternoon, the bustle is at the thickest; and strangers visiting the hillside which overlooks the harbour, will see the sight in all its glory.

Viewing the harbour and quays from this vantage-ground, which commands the greater portion of the scene, the spectacle is striking, as all the hurry and bustle incidental to the cure is here concentrated. Scores of boats are already in, and the various crews have begun the process of carrying ashore the fish. Men clad in picturesque oilskin leggings and original-looking overcoats, and boots that might be coffins to ordinary humanity, are busy with great wooden spades shovelling the herrings into the baskets, four of which make a cran. These are rapidly carried—for everything is done in a desperate hurry—by the gangs of hired men to the gutting-places, which are of the dimensions of an ordinary-sized room, but with low sides—and the glittering contents of the baskets poured in like a torrent; then a person who is on the watch to keep an account of what is brought, rushes like a madman to a barrel containing salt, and spreading out the herrings with a spade, scatters large handfuls over them. If the take has been large, this goes on for hours; the quay-roads then become ankle-deep in brine, the men are dripping herring-water all the way from the boats to the troughs; and the atmosphere is laden with the *wersh* perfume of the fresh fish. Upon the arrival of each boat, the same routine has to be gone through, till all the fish have been brought on shore. By this time, the operation of gutting and packing is in full force, and constitutes a highly curious element in the picture.

For some time before, we had seen lounging about the curing-yards, and wandering among the piles of empty barrels, a rather incongruous but not uninteresting portion of the assemblage: groups of Highland girls dressed in white short-gowns and black petticoats, and with uncovered hair in smooth and glittering braids. They had a bright independent look, which was very piquant, and seemed to observe, with a sort of careless curiosity, the coarse labours of the men. But where are they now? A sound as if of the slap of Harlequin's sword, and short-gowns, petticoats, and girls are suddenly transmogrified into veritable witches, 'so withered and so wild in their attire,' that we start almost in terror, wondering what part they are to play in the drama. We have not long to wait, however, for they are at once seized with the tarentular phrensy of the men, and fling themselves headlong into their business. The operations performed by them are indeed carried on with singular speed and dexterity. Yonder woman with the blood-bespattered visage, a very fiend incarnadined, guts a herring every two seconds; and her neighbour at the barrel, when kept well supplied with fish, packs it in the regulation style in eleven minutes: that is, she rouses the fish in a large tub, takes them out in handfuls, and then arranges them in mathematical order in the barrel, sprinkling a portion of salt on each layer. And so they proceed till the trough is at last emptied; and then they forthwith resume their natural shape and costume; and with their white short-gowns, black petticoats, and braided hair, and with the flush of exercise and triumph on their cheeks and in their eyes, turn their backs upon the scene and return to

their homes. This occupation being of the nature of piece-work, is very lucrative, and these nymphs of the herring-trough, being able to realise considerable sums of money, are among the gayest belles of the town; but when posted round the trough, dipping their brawny arms deep among the scaly treasures, seizing each a fish, ripping it up, heaving it into a basket, and throwing the viscera into a box, at the rate of thirty a minute, they form a group easier to imagine than describe. It is Saturday, and the quays are thronged with carts, busy carrying away the nets to be spread out and dried on the neighbouring fields, and there they remain till Monday, there being no fishing either on Saturday or Sunday nights. During the season, the brae of Pulteneytown, which adjoins Wick, is crowded with spectators looking down on the animated scene below, and in the afternoon, watching the going out of the fleet to sea.

The commerce in herring is different from most other kinds of trading, inasmuch as the whole of the goods are bought months before they are brought to market. In some of the German or Prussian ports, there lives a merchant whose business consists in sending salted herrings into the far interior of the continent, where they are luxuries which sometimes only the rich are able to purchase: he knows the markets which are open to him, and the number of barrels he can readily dispose of. He is generally a person of some capital, and able to advance money to the curers when required. He corresponds with them, and bargains for a certain number of barrels at a certain price; and it is these curers who come in between the merchant and the fisherman to deal for the 'green fish.' Then the fisherman, having made his bargain, which is generally so much per cran, and a bounty to each boat in addition, proceeds to supplement his regular crew, which may consist only of himself and his two sons, by hiring two or three of the sturdy men who annually visit Wick from the islands for the purpose of assisting in the fishery. These 'hired men' receive perhaps L.5 or L.6 for the season, besides lodging and food; and as to bounties and prices, they vary considerably. Thus one of the local papers informs us, that 'the bounties paid last year ranged from L.20 to L.30 and upwards, besides perquisites. Those given for the present season's fishing, we were told, varied from L.30 to L.50, in addition to 14s. and upwards, per cran. The complement of fish agreed to be delivered to the curer, provided they are caught, is 200 crans. All beyond that quantity is at the fisherman's disposal, and the curer generally enters into a new contract for the surplus.' There is generally an influx of about five or six thousand of the hardy islanders of Skye, or the Lewis, accompanied by numerous female relations, who find employment at the troughs. The bargains with curers are made, perhaps, at the close of one season for the next. The curer has to bring home the billet-wood, get it sawn up into staves—for which purpose there are several water and steam mills at Wick—and then have it converted into barrels, of which many hundreds have to be kept in stock. Then he is obliged to have on hand a large stock of salt. A staff of coopers is also necessary to make up the barrels, and to head and hoop them when they are filled with fish, and have the various parcels ready to be examined and branded by the officer of the Board of Fisheries; after which they are ready for shipment to the various home and continental markets.

The scenes presented, even at our smaller fishing-stations in the herring-season, are well worth seeing; but to view the great picture in perfection, requires a visit to Wick, or a tour of the Moray Firth, where there are also a great number of harbours for the fisheries. Let tourists take our advice, and spend a

fortnight at Wick, making a run to John o' Groat's, or a visit to Shetland, to diversify the scene a little. We offer this as a prescription that will kill one year's ennui as dead as a cured herring.

ANATOMY OF A LITERARY FORGERY.

ALTHOUGH, doubtless, all the world, or at least all the reading part of it, has heard of that most audacious of literary forgeries, *Vortigern*, a *Tragedy*, yet, as we suspect that very few even of the few who have seen it have ever read it, and that only a small minority of our readers generally is at all likely to be acquainted with its history, we purpose to avail ourselves of the recent acquisition of a copy of the rare reprint of 1832,* to supply—in many places in the forger's own words—such an account of the circumstances which led to the perpetration of the fraud as shall be wanting, we fully hope, neither in interest nor instruction.

Samuel Ireland, the father of the unhappy lad whose career we are about to trace, was emphatically one of those madmen who make men mad—one of those idolaters who esteem the book above the life, and who, without an eye to see or a heart to understand wherein lies the greatness of him whom they adore, prefer some filthy, worm-eaten, useless relic of their deified mortal to the body of genius and wisdom, which is in the better testament of his works. Even such a divinity, according to the testimony of the son, was Shakspeare to Samuel Ireland. 'Four days at least out of the seven' were his writings made the after-dinner theme of the old man's conversation; while in the evening, still further to impress the subject upon the minds of his son and his visitors, certain plays were selected, and a part allotted to each, in order that they might read aloud and—commune, doubtless, with the soul of their divinity, and extract the heart of the mystery? no—but in order that they might 'thereby acquire a knowledge of the delivery of blank verse articulately and with proper emphasis!' 'The comments to which these rehearsals, if I may be permitted so to call them, gave rise, were of a nature to elicit, in all its bearings, the enthusiasm entertained by my father for the bard of Avon. With him, Shakspeare was no mortal, but a divinity; and frequently, while expatiating on this subject, impregnated with all the fervour of Garrick, with whom he had been on intimate terms, my father would declare that to possess a single vestige of the poet's handwriting, would be esteemed a gem beyond all price, and far dearer to him than his whole collection.' At these conversations, young Ireland was always present, 'swallowing with avidity the honeyed poison; when, by way,' he says, 'of completing this infatuation, my father, who had already produced picturesque tours of some of the British rivers, determined on commencing that of the Avon, and I was selected as the companion of his journey. Of course,' he adds, 'no inquiries were spared, either at Stratford or in the neighbourhood, respecting the mighty poet. Every legendary tale, vended anecdote, or traditional account, was treasured up. In short, the name of Shakspeare ushered in the dawn, and a bumper, quaffed to his immortal memory at night, sealed our weary eyelids to repose.'

Induced by the reiterated eulogies rung in his ears respecting Shakspeare, by his father's enthusiasm, and, above all, by the incessant remark on the old man's part, 'that to possess even a signature of the bard would make him the happiest of human beings,' it occurred to young Ireland to take advantage of his residence in a conveyancer's office, environed by old deeds, to produce a spurious imitation of Shakspeare's

autograph. Having supplied himself with a tracing of the poet's signature, he wrote a mortgage-deed, imitating the law-hand of the time of James I., and affixed thereto Shakspeare's sign-manual. This mortgage-deed, purporting to be between Shakspeare and one Michael Fraser and Elizabeth his wife, not only transported the sage elder into the seventh heaven of felicity, but attracted crowds of other connoisseurs and antiquaries. To the question where the deed was found, Ireland the younger replied, that 'he had formed an acquaintance with a gentleman of ancient family, possessed of a mass of deeds and papers relating to his ancestors, who, finding him very partial to the examination of old documents, had permitted him to inspect them; that, shortly after commencing his search, the mortgage-deed in question had fallen into his hands, and had been presented to him by the proprietor.' He added, 'that the personage alluded to, well aware that the name of Shakspeare must create a considerable sensation, and being a very retiring and diffident man, had bound him by a solemn engagement never to divulge his name.' Whereupon—so completely had this young rogue's skill and plausibility produced the effect he wished—Mr Byng, afterwards Viscount Torrington, Sir Frederick Eden, and many others, gave it as their decided opinion that, whosoever he found the deed, there, no doubt, the mass of papers existed which had been so long and vainly sought after by the numerous commentators on Shakspeare!

Thus urged to make 'further searches,' as he modestly called them, the young scapegrace proceeded to pen a few letters and 'The Profession of Faith of William Shakspeare,'* the whole of which passed muster, although, in many instances, the documents produced as two hundred years old had not been fabricated many hours previous to their production. On the pretended 'Profession of Faith,' particularly, Dr Warton, after having twice perused the important document, pronounced a pompous eulogy in the presence of Dr Parr: 'Sir, we have many fine things in our church-service, and our liturgy abounds in beauties; but here, sir, is a man who has distanced us all!'

Well might the precocious lad be excited by these old ass-heads to more ambitious efforts! Anon, he announced the existence of a drama—the *Vortigern* we have already referred to—although, if he is to be believed, he had never essayed a pen at poetical composition, and had not at the time written a single line of the play which he purposed producing. Prior to its completion, the fame of his discoveries had resounded from one extremity of the country to the other; and on the completion of the drama, strenuous applications were made by the lessee of

* It is curious enough that a somewhat similar fraud had, a quarter of a century before, been played off by Stevens upon Malone. Thomas Hart, a descendant of Shakspeare's sister, Joan, employed, in the year 1770, a bricklayer of the name of Mosely to new-tile his house—the same house in Henley Street, Stratford, bequeathed by the poet to his sister 'for the term of her natural life, at the yearly rent of twelve pence'; and here, between the rafters and the tiling, he discovered, or is said to have discovered, a manuscript of six leaves, purporting to be 'The Confession of Faith of John Shakspear (the poet's father), an unworthy member of the holy Catholic religion.' Mosely gave his prize to Mr Peyton, an alderman of Stratford, who sent it to Malone, through the Rev. Mr Davenport, as a curiosity of great importance. Malone was completely deceived. 'I have taken some pains,' he says, in 1780, 'to ascertain the authenticity of this document, and am perfectly satisfied that it is genuine.' But the paper, as we have said, was a fabrication, and a clumsy one—a trick of Stevens to mislead his rival editor. Malone, however, discovered his error at last. 'I have since obtained documents,' he says in a subsequent publication, 'that clearly prove it could not have been the composition of any of our poet's family.' Boswell quietly and judiciously dropped the document from his edition, treating it as a paper that had never existed. Malone himself was not guiltless of like unseemly frauds. The drawing of Shakspeare's house of New Place, which figures in his edition of 1790 as taken 'from the margin of an ancient survey,' is, by his own confession, a forgery.

* *The Shakspeare Forgeries. Vortigern, a Tragedy.* Reprinted from the edition of 1796, with an Introduction. By W. H. Ireland. London. 1832.

Covent Garden Theatre to secure it; but the elder Ireland, from his long intimacy with the Sheridan and Linley families, preferred Drury Lane, where the play was subsequently represented.

Malone, whose experience of deception had given him some caution, now stood forward as 'generalissimo of the unbelievers.' 'Some pamphlets *pro* and *con*. had also issued from the press, while the newspapers incessantly teemed with paragraphs written on the spur of the moment, and dictated by the particular sentiments entertained as to the papers by their authors. Malone having, in the interim, collected his mass of documents intended to prove the whole a forgery, committed them to the press, under a hope that he should be able to publish his volume before the representation of *Vortigern*. The bulkiness of his production, however, having defeated that object, he, the day the piece was to be performed, issued a notice, to the effect that he had a work on the eve of publication which would infallibly prove the manuscripts in Mr Ireland's possession mere fabrications, and warning the people not to be imposed upon by the play advertised for that night's representation, as being from the pen of Shakspeare. 'My father'—it is young Ireland who writes—'having procured a copy of this notice, though late in the day, instantly forwarded to the press the following handbill, and distributed an immense number amongst the assembled multitudes, then choking up every avenue to Drury Lane Theatre: "*VORTIGERN*.—A malevolent and impotent attack on the Shakspeare MSS. having appeared on the eve of representation of the play of *Vortigern*, evidently intended to injure the interests of the proprietor of the MSS., Mr Ireland feels it impossible, within the short space of time that intervenes between the publishing and the representation, to produce an answer to the most illiberal and unfounded assertions in Mr Malone's *Inquiry*: he is therefore induced to request that the play of *Vortigern* may be heard with that candour that has ever distinguished a British audience."

John Philip Kemble, who was then stage-manager at Drury Lane, and had had the hero's part in the tragedy assigned to him, saw at a glance that such rubbish as composes *Vortigern* could never have emanated from the mind of Shakspeare, even in his babyhood, and passed that sentence upon it which he felt the public ought, and did afterwards most effectually pronounce. He therefore did his best to procure its representation on the first, instead of the second, of April 1796, 'in order to pass upon the audience the compliment of *fools all*.' Foiled in this by the interposition of old Ireland and Mr Sheridan, Kemble, however, so managed that the farce of *My Grandmother* should follow the tragedy, 'intending that all the bearings of that production should be applied by the audience to the subject of the Shakspearian papers.' He is also charged by the younger Ireland with having preconceived a signal when the opponents of the papers were to manifest their disapprobation. For this purpose, the following line in the fifth act was selected:

And when this solemn mockery is o'er.

However this may be, no sooner had he arrived at this line, which he delivered in an exceedingly pointed manner, than 'a deafening clamour reigned throughout one of the most crowded houses ever recollected in theatrical history, which lasted several minutes. Upon a hearing being at length obtained, instead of taking up the following line of the speech in rotation, Mr Kemble reiterated the above line with an expression the most pointedly sarcastic and acrimonious it is possible to conceive. Added to this, the late Mr Dignum was purposely placed by Mr Kemble in a subordinate part, wherein, speaking of the sounding of trumpets, he had to exclaim: "*Let them bellow on!*"

which words were uttered with such a nasal and tinkettle twang, that no muscles save those of adamant [*sic*] could have resisted the powerful incentive to laughter.'

So far the Irelands and their adherents were scotched, but not slain. Malone's *Investigation* was at length published, and was answered by George Chalmers, first in his *Apology for the Believers*, and next in his *Supplemental Apology*, wherein he refuted, to young Ireland's satisfaction, every position laid down by Malone. After the avowal of the forgery, the author of *Vortigern* forwarded two very humble letters to Mr Chalmers, who, maintaining a prudent silence, never answered them.

This avowal was made from a stroke of conscience. The forgery had been charged upon the elder Ireland instead of the younger. It was argued that the latter's youth—he was but nineteen—precluding all possibility of the papers being his, the whole must have been fabricated by his father, who had made the son the vehicle of introducing them to the public. It seems, however, that the former was a total stranger to every proceeding in the composition of the papers; and George Steevens, who had been also suspected of participation in the fraud, is stated by Ireland to have been equally innocent. Urged by the imperious motive of rescuing his father's character from unmerited obloquy, he came forward with the truth, having first abandoned the paternal roof, and relinquished a profession for which he was studying. 'With the wide world before me,' he says, 'and a host of the most implacable enemies at my back, ere my twentieth year, I entered upon the eventful pilgrimage of life, without a guide to direct my steps, or any means of existence save those which might result from my own industry and perseverance.' Of his after-career we know nothing.

INDIAN SERVANTS.

THERE has been an occasional gleam of sunshine in the lurid horror of the terrible revolt of the sepoy. Many instances have occurred of fidelity and humanity amongst a people whose prejudices and devotional feelings are all against their alien rulers. These have chiefly been found amongst domestic servants—the men who have been brought into close home contact with the English. It may not be uninteresting to our readers, just at this moment, to hear something of the habits and offices of this race, to gaze upon a rude sketch of our Indian servants; and we can best draw it by recalling our first impressions and observations concerning them. Two days after our landing, a feverish attack confined me to my chamber and the adjoining sitting-room. As yet, I had only seen the servants *en masse*, as it were, without absolutely distinguishing one from the other. Now, as it was not clear whether my illness was infectious or not, I was left to the care of the native ayah and a European maid. After sunset, thinking they would both be glad of a little cool air, I told them they might leave me, and go on the house-top or into the garden for a change. They accepted the offer gladly, and I soon after fell asleep on the sofa of the sitting-room. I awoke with eager thirst; and as I slowly opened my eyes, beheld what appeared to me, at first, a strange vision. On a mat on the ground, at the foot of the sofa, sat the tall figure of a very handsome native, his arms crossed on his bosom, and his large black eyes fixed earnestly on my face. He was dressed in a peon's attire—that is, a sort of short white blouse girt round the waist by a sash; a turban on his head, and a sword beside him. That he was devout, a short strip of paint between his eyebrows testified. I felt at first a little uneasy at finding myself the object of that fixed stare; but it was only significant of the watchfulness of a

careful attendant. The moment I stirred, the dark eyes fell, and the lithe form rose with noiseless grace. He went outside the crimson silk screen which stood at the door, and returned with a glass of toast and water, which he held kindly, but very respectfully, to my lips. When I had finished drinking, he replaced the tumbler, and again seated himself, this time with drooping eyes and folded arms, for I was awake, and could speak if I needed anything. Still not a movement escaped him. I was restless, and he smoothed and arranged my pillows; I dropped my handkerchief—it was restored instantly; I looked flushed, and he brought a punkah of painted feathers, and fanned me. A kinder nurse than this poor peon I never saw.

He was, I found, the sepoy who waited in the young ladies' apartments; and at night, with his drawn sword beside him, slept at our open chamber-doors, ever ready, if called on, to destroy an insect or bring a cup of tea. A civil, quiet, amiable man was Juan the sepoy—a Mohammedan, we believe, though, as we were not allowed to talk on religious subjects with the servants of the palace, we could not be sure.

His service was a gentle one. He was always—except at his hours for eating, &c.—to be found seated near the sitting-room door, ready to go errands, pull the punkah or fan which hangs across the room, pick up a handkerchief, wipe our pens, and render every sort of miscellaneous service which English languor or luxury might exact. And his 'spiriting' was done in a style worthy of Ariel, so graceful was it, and noiseless, and calm.

There were two hundred servants altogether in and about Parell. The head domestics were Parsees. The major-domo, a fat, portly personage, ruled all the others. He was a good-looking man, with a very intelligent countenance, handsome, though disfigured by the high purple cotton Guebre cap. All the men who waited at table, or brought food, when at any time required, were Parsees. I found, when we travelled, that I had to commit the custody of my rupees, in their heavy bag, to Cursetjee, the under butler, or major-domo's assistant, who doled my money out to me when required, and was treasurer in like manner to the whole family. These servants were very superior to all the other domestics. Handsome, active, intelligent, and kindly, they shew superiority of race in a very extraordinary degree. One of them was called the 'Count d'Orsay' of the establishment, on account of his studied elegance of manner, which was at times very entertaining. He went to the governor one day, and with profound humility requested 'a letter of introduction' to the staff-surgeon, the talented and excellent Dr McLennan. The governor, amused at the request, asked why he wished to have it. 'To ask for some pills,' was the reply. *N.B.*—The pills were of course supplied to all of the household who asked for them. Another time, when we were travelling, and I had unwittingly rested my feet on a covered basket at the bottom of the carriage, an act which caused him, as *provedditore*, some uneasiness, he came up to the door, bowed profoundly, and observed 'that it was not good for *misses' health* to sit with her feet in the butter!' Our own especial Parsee, however, the 'ladies' favourite,' was superior to all the others. His name was Arjesia; he was active in fulfilling the slightest request; honest, kind, and intelligent, and took apparently a greater interest in us than the other servants did. He liked to explain customs, to teach us Hindostanee words, to inform us about his own faith. Once, on occasion of a total eclipse which took place during our stay in India, we asked him why the people of the adjoining village were tam-taming and making such a noise. He replied: 'Ignorant people think that great serpent come to eat up sun, so they beat tam-tam to frighten him away.'

'And what do you think the darkness is, Arjesia?'

'Parsee know, Ma'am Sahib. Sun angry 'cos men wicked; he *hide him face*.'

Once a European maid-servant asked him why he sighed so deeply, as he came out of the lady's room.

'Ah, because me like Ma'am Sahib, and she so wicked; I know God be angry with her.'

'Why, what has she done wicked?'

'She blow out candle, like nothin' t' all. Oh!'

This lamentation of poor Arjesia reminds me that it is—at least on the Bombay side of India—the peculiar office of a separate servant to light and extinguish the candles and lamps. This man is called a massall; and it was his office I thoughtlessly usurped when I blew out the taper, and shocked my kind Parsee friend. It is this man, the massall, who steals noiselessly through the chambers at nightfall, and lights the wicks floating in a tumbler of cocoa-nut oil, which stand on the floor of every bedroom. If a light is required at any other hour in the twenty-four, it is the massall who is sought to light it. I once nearly lost an English mail by requiring a taper to seal my letter. The massall had to be found before light could be obtained at all; and when the taper was lighted, it was stopped by every Parsee it met on its road to me, that the first kindled fire might be duly revered.

Parsees, peons, massalls. Who come next? Oh, the ayah! In order of precedence, she should have been first. We can see that important personage even now, in our mind's eye—a small woman, rather old too, gaily dressed in a yellow satin jacket, and a voluminous veil falling all round her, of white muslin edged with gold. Her office was to attend her young ladies after the bath, braid hair, which she did to perfection, and otherwise attire them; but she could not work as an English lady's-maid does, and therefore an essential member of the feminine staff was a *dirgee* or tailor.

Our *dirgee*, hired at fifteen rupees (L.1, 10s.) per month, was a Portuguese half-caste, rejoicing in the name of Giuseppe Maria Emanuele da Silva. Seated on a sheet in one corner of our bedroom, he waited quietly for anything to mend or make, and did his work beautifully. His genius was, however, rather imitative than creative. He always made dresses by a European pattern, save in one instance, when, to please him, we allowed him to make up an India muslin just as he chose. It was, when finished, of a pretty fancy, though very singular, being trimmed all over with small fans of muslin, fastened with bows of ribbon. He worked beautifully, his stitches being nearly invisible. When he left me for another place, he brought a certificate for my signature; this paper, evidently written by some professional scribe or letter-writer, stated that the said Giuseppe Maria Emanuele da Silva was 'honourable, discreet, honest, clever—an unequalled *dirgee*,' and, in fact, possessed of every virtue under heaven. I demurred a little at having to make, or rather sign, such assertions; but I was told the certificate would only be taken at its real value, as it was a mere form; so I added thereto my name.

'Ayah' proved to be the least trustworthy of our Indian servants. Having taken offence at one of her 'young ladies,' she changed a bottle of red lavender for one of laudanum; and but for a mistake of the hakim or native doctor, who dispensed medicines in the house, the dose thus taken might have been fatal, and a very charming young lady have been lost to English society; but the laudanum had by accident been mixed with tincture of rhubarb.

Our 'housemaids' were men—hamals, as they are called (an Arabic name) in Bombay. Their office was to make beds, clean the rooms, &c. It was strange to see them at their feminine tasks, some few of which only appeared worthy of their strength; and when their work of this kind was finished, stranger still to

behold them seated on the ground making, perhaps, a satin jacket for their wives! They filled the baths. A low-caste woman, born to her office, which is hereditary, emptied all slops from the basin and bath. In fact, the division of labour was absolutely intricate.

Our washerman or dobee was also a constant servant. No change of laundresses in India! Your dobee goes where you go, taking his train of *employés* with him, and washing your scarcely tumbled garments in the tank, with such energy, that their beatings on the stones cause the dirgee's services to be very frequently in request.

Then come the mollies—an appellation which would better suit the masculine housemaids than the caste to which it belongs—that is, the gardeners. Low-caste they are, and very poor, as may be seen by their slight figures and scanty garments, for your 'native,' as he rises in the scale of rupees, waxes ponderous as well as prosperous, and wears clothing in accordance with his estate. We saw but little of our poor molly; only once a day, in fact, when we left our bedrooms, and found him waiting outside with the pretty morning-offering of a bouquet of large roses, full blown, tied round a stick in the form of a large plate, and well sprinkled with rose-water.

They rank as outdoor servants with gorawallahs (grooms), &c., and perhaps should scarcely be included amongst household servants; but that graceful little morning visit has given them, in our mind, a place within the threshold.

All other domestics are almost constantly within sight and hearing; for as there are no bells to summon them, their attendance is nearer and more personal than that of European attendants. One or two are constantly in the apartment, or just outside it, like the 'confidants' of an old French comedy; and must thus become more intimate with the feelings, habits, and interests of the family than our English servants do. It is amongst this class that much faith, kindness, and gratitude have been displayed in the late dreadful revolt; as indeed might naturally have been expected. But for their habitual timidity, they would probably have done much more. We remember the only instance in which the question of whose place it was to do a thing, occurred in an establishment where every man was born to his work, and did it. This was an *embarras* proceeding wholly from want of courage. I was reading in the young ladies' parlour in our Deccan bungalow, when a voice from the next room called me. I obeyed the summons, which came from a brave-hearted lady who was on a sofa, and unable to move from indisposition.

'I think,' she said softly, 'there is a tiger in my bedroom; I have seen a shadow like one through the open door. Will you shut it, and call the chobdhar?'—her 'silver-stick.'

I complied, not without a little trepidation, and then called to her attendant: 'Chobdhar! a tiger in lady's room; come and shoot him!'

'Eh, me! missee—no, not my place; I call sepoy.'

Sepoy made the same objection; Parsee ditto: at length a large party, armed with guns, assembled, and in great force entered the sitting-room. Then came the tug of war: it was nobody's place to open the door, and I was finally compelled to do the deed with my own hand, which, after all, required no great valour, as it opened towards me, and was in itself a cover. No rush of a tiger followed. There was a pause, and then slowly, with guns levelled, they advanced and discovered—not a tiger, but a large cat, whose magnified shadow had thus betrayed to English eyes their want of pluck.

Our servants slept on mats outside our rooms, in case of nightly service being required, well wrapped from mosquitoes in veils of different degrees of smartness. We used to walk through a gallery of sleeping

attendants on our way to our own rooms every night, and slept ourselves with open doors, confident in their protection and good faith. We trust this confidence will still continue, and that when we think of the Bengal sepoy's cruelty and treachery, we may at the same moment recollect how kind, how gentle, and, in most instances, how faithful have been our Indian servants.

OUR CURATES.

We have had a great number of these in our parish, and from my position as churchwarden, I am tolerably well fitted to speak upon the subject. Under 'Preferences and Appointments,' in the church newspapers, you may have seen, about once in every six months or so, 'the Rev. Somebody Something to the curacy of Little Biddlebrigham, Devon,' and have been under the mistaken impression that the young man had got a good thing; but this is far from being the case. 'A title given' and 'a sole charge' are the baits with which we allure juvenile divines into our parish, and we have found them very killing—the baits, I mean, not the divines; but since we are upon that subject, I may state at once that the word might have been not seldom applied to our curates themselves.

Perceval Smarte, B.A., of the university of Oxford, was a great example amongst us of this sort. It was almost a pity that a gentleman with so accurate an eye for colour, and with so chaste a notion of costume, should have been restricted in the choice of vestments by the nature of his profession. The canon relating to ecclesiastical attire might have been suspended in his particular case with the greatest safety, and without risk of the case so carefully guarded against, of a scarlet clergyman with yellow stripes. He once shewed me a whole drawerful of lemon-coloured kid-gloves, almost all new, which he had amassed during his lay career, and which he had no intention whatever of wearing again.

'It seems hard, does it not?' sighed Perceval Smarte—and I think there was a dewiness in his large blue eyes when he said it—'but we must all make our little sacrifices.' What, however, the strict letter of the highest church-discipline did permit him in garments, he took the fullest advantage of. I never yet saw a curate in canonicals who had such an exceeding resemblance to a bishop. Upon one occasion, when the clerk was indisposed, I went into the vestry with our curate to assist him in attiring himself, and I shall not easily forget it. I only wish I knew the technical names for half the things—the under-garments—in which I invested him. A certain black silk waistcoat, which reached down to his hips, was fastened—I remember *that*—at the back of his right shoulder; and there was an enormous agate brooch, with a black cross upon it, the pin of which, in my clumsy attempts to fasten it, I ran into his neck. His surplice was, I suppose, lawn of a dazzling whiteness, made to stick out in all directions, as though inflated: this, while he remained at Little Biddlebrigham, was washed every week. His immediate predecessor had not been so particular in this matter, and wore one of a very different material. Perceval Smarte, who assisted him upon the last Sunday of his stay with us, is said to have observed to him sarcastically: 'I think, my friend, if I did borrow a table-cloth to read prayers in, I would try to procure a clean one.' Besides attending to his duties in the parish very assiduously, Mr Smarte took the taste of our young ladies under his entire control; not a gown was chosen without an eye to his

approbation, not a bonnet selected without the inward reflection: 'Now, I wonder what will our curate say to this!' I must confess that I think he abused his elevated position in the pulpit to scrutinise, before the service commenced, the 'novelties' recently imported by his fair parishioners, for I always noticed that he was most severe upon them on Monday mornings. He was not a poor man—or he could not have stopped so long as he did at Little Biddlebrigham, where a non-resident rector offers the hope of 'a recompense far higher than any mere pecuniary reward,' and indeed does not, I believe, ever insult our curates by the proffer of a stipend. He had a very comfortable little bachelor establishment; and his sister sometimes came and stayed with him, who was the superior of some sort of amateur convent in the north, and wore a very becoming dress, which distinguished, as she loved to call it, her 'order.' While she remained, there was a series of festivities given by Mr Perceval Smarte: such snowy napkins, such glistening plate, ay, and wine, too, of such first-rate excellence, as was not to be surpassed at the squire's (Mr Broadland's) own table at the hall. I remember but one mischance at these entertainments of our curate, and that, I think, happened the winter before last. Mr Smarte had an infinite deal of trouble in getting men-servants to his liking out of our parish, and the one he had then, a certain Samuel Scroggin, was only upon trial. This poor fellow had never seen such things as hot-water plates before, nor did he at all imagine that their duty was to keep our food warm: he opined, indeed, from their form and character, that they were intended for quite another purpose; and when we trooped down into the dining-room, we found them garnishing each individual chair—Samuel had thought they were to sit upon in that cold weather. That was the only occasion upon which the Rev. Perceval was ever known to use a naughty expression, and the lady-superior strove in vain to drown it by a cough.

He was a very good man, and a very kind man, I do believe, although he had not much judgment in managing the vestry, and made a great deal of fuss about a parcel of saints and martyrs, whom nobody at Little Biddlebrigham had ever so much as heard the names of. I, for one, was very sorry when that tremendous disturbance took place about the wax-candles, with which the whole world is now sufficiently acquainted, and our parish in particular was convulsed. He was a better man, I believe, after all, than the Rev. Curte Sharpely who succeeded him.

Mr Sharpely was a scholar of that magnitude, that one could never understand above half his sermons, and the other half was devoted to personalities. Upon the very second Sunday of his preaching, he flew at the poor squire for having a guest in his house who had peculiar opinions, and did not come to church. He asked us all what was our opinion of that man who could take tea with a deist; and the squire and his family walked straight out of their pew at once, followed by all their servants, and by the sexton, who is also the squire's gardener. The clerk himself was seen to vacillate at his desk, doubtful whether his allegiance was most due to his temporal or spiritual head. Altogether, the scene was of a character not easily to be erased from the mind of a Little Biddlebrighamer. Mr Curte Sharpely had a great deal to contend against in our parish after this; and it was wonderful that he effected so much good as he really did. He had, however, a very strong will, and frightened our village schoolmaster a great deal more than the schoolmaster could ever frighten the boys; the mistress alone stood up against him womanfully, declining to work his somewhat exacting behests, upon the ground that she 'was not a clergyman, nor able to perform impossibilities.' He made himself acquainted with the weak points of everybody's character, with the

skeleton in everybody's house, with the unpleasantnesses that had taken place in every family in Little Biddlebrigham, and by these means attained considerable power, without making a single friend. The neighbouring clergy disliked our little curate; but at their district theological meetings he took the lead, and was by no means to be put down. The bishop, it was rumoured, had asked his opinion upon a Hebrew passage, when he came down hither to confirm; the archdeacon did not venture to patronise him; the rural dean desisted from his usual rubber upon the night when our curate dined with him. Nobody dined with Mr Curte Sharpely; he had cold meat at his meals in preference to hot, and drank with them some peculiar effervescent mixture of his own contriving, which, I believe, turned acid upon his stomach, and in some degree accounted for his disposition. His study and accurate knowledge of the classics and divinity did not soften his manners, nor indeed prevent them from being absolutely ferocious. People sometimes never spoke to him more than once; nobody ever differed from him after the first time. He had a rug at his front-door with *Cave canem* stamped upon it, and Mr Broadland used to say it meant, 'Beware of the curate'; most of the Little Biddlebrighamers adopted a still freer translation, and held it to signify, 'Please to wipe your shoes.' When Mr Curte Sharpely left us, we were certainly most of us pleased, but were yet obliged to confess that he had taken the parish by the shoulders, and shoved it along the roads to health and education further than any curate who had come before him.

A very horrible thing happened in our parish after his departure. A young gentleman, the Rev. Julian Montacute, tutor in the squire's family, consented to take the services for a few weeks, until we got a minister to suit us, for our non-resident rector had been too terrified by the letters of Curte Sharpely ever to appoint another man without some trial. Mr Montacute was handsome, elegant, and had attained high honours at the universities; but he was of very tender years. We doubted whether, transferred as he was about to be from private to public life, he would muster courage enough to read and preach before Little Biddlebrigham; it was agreed among the most influential families that it would be quite excusable if he declined preaching a sermon at all. We need not, however, have given ourselves any concern about this matter, as Mr Julian Montacute not only read with great judgment and perfect nerve, but also astonished us with one of the most beautiful flights of extempore pulpit oratory with which our parish has been favoured. As learned as Curte Sharpely, as dignified as Perceval Smarte, this young man had, besides, a store of pathos and a charm of delivery that were peculiarly his own. There was scarcely a lady without a pocket-handkerchief; and in the squire's pew, Miss Eleanor— But there, I will repeat no domestic scandal; the misadventure of our whole parish with Mr Julian Montacute is surely of itself sufficiently interesting. The whole congregation, in short, was delighted; nor was there a tea-party in Little Biddlebrigham for weeks where the eloquence of our young divine was not the unfailing theme of praise.

On the next Sunday, the Wesleyan chapel was deserted; and the Ranter at the slate-quarry on the hill preached to empty air. The church was filled to its porch with a crowd of eager listeners, and again the Rev. Julian Montacute won every ear and moistened every eye. Two young ladies, who were about to be married in our parish, entreated as a particular favour that they should be united by his graceful hands; but he delicately declined to perform this ceremony for them. Several young ladies not about to be married— But again, let me confine myself to our public misfortune—in a word, our minister was the

idol of Little Biddlebrigham, and the epithets applied to him ranged through the whole pet-curate scale, from 'so unaffectedly devout,' down to 'such a dear darling duck of a man.' What need for any more advertisements? Was there any man, whether 'strictly Anglican' or 'purely evangelical,' for whom we would exchange the Rev. Julian Montacute? Most certainly not; but as he still refused either to marry, to bury, or to christen, upon the alleged ground of his mere temporary appointment, and as self-willed persons went on marrying, and dying, and being born in the parish just as usual, it became necessary to look out for another curate. Our secret design, indeed, was to restrict the new man to the performance of these routine duties, and to keep our cherished Montacute on, if it were possible, for preaching purposes. Upon the very day, however, that the Rev. Decimus Green and his mother—who was almost another curate, dear good soul, as it turned out afterwards—came down to Little Biddlebrigham, Mr Montacute fled. He left a letter upon the squire's breakfast-table to say he was very sorry, but that he had never been ordained at all, and was not a clergyman; and the squire brought it down to the vestry, and almost turned us into stone with the news. The two young brides congratulated themselves very considerably that 'the wicked wretch, about whom, to say truth, they had always had their suspicions,' had not performed that ceremony about which they had been so anxious. The Wesleyan minister remarked with a chuckle that he had always understood that clergymen of the Church of England were recognisable to the faithful by some infallible sign; while the Ranter assured his again overflowing audiences the whole affair was a judgment upon Little Biddlebrigham. Nobody else, I hope, was pleased in our parish.

Poor Mr Decimus Green, than whom no mortal was ever simpler or more truthful, was pestered to death about his credentials after this, and our theological stable-door most carefully locked after the stealing of the steed. He had not the eloquence of the late usurper of our pulpit, and we were inclined to be dissatisfied with him just at first; but when we got to know his earnestness and intrinsic merit, we somehow learned to like his discourses too: they were good, indeed, of themselves, only he could not preach them, on account of his being so shy and nervous. It was one of the pleasantest sights in the world to look at dear Mrs Green while her son was delivering his sermons; her pride in them and him was so entirely unaffected and undisguised, and, at the same time, as it seemed, so right and agreeable.

'What did you think of my son Mus, this morning?' was what she would say to me every Sunday while we waited for him to come out of the vestry, after service, in order that we three might walk home together, for we lived in the same quarter of the little town, quite in the midst of it, and away from the sea: or 'Mus is rather long at times; don't you find him so?' she would now and then observe; and when you said, 'No, certainly not,' as of course you did, she would smile as only mothers can when their boys are praised. In the summer-time, when little Biddlebrigham was rather fashionable, and strangers came down to bathe and enjoy the sands, she was doubly interested in what the congregations thought about him; and it was our delight to represent them as being enthusiastically admiring; for we all loved Mrs Green, I think, and the poor most of all. While Decimus went out among them with his supply of spiritual comforts, his mother made her regular rounds with a great basketful of temporal ones, and she was certainly not less welcome than her son. Of all the curates which Little Biddlebrigham ever had, indeed, these two, who worked so well together, were certainly the best. The old lady had no fault—or at least, now that she is gone, we will

not confess that much—the young man had but one. Mus or Decimus Green was obstinate—obstinate as a pig, as a jackass, as a man with a scientific theory; in fact, despite his modesty, no man who did not know him could tell how obstinate Decimus Green was. Last summer, our town became so fashionable, that its ordinary accommodations proved insufficient for its throng of visitors. The gentlemen, therefore, gave up the use of our half-dozen bathing-machines entirely to the ladies, while they themselves migrated into a neighbouring bay, taking their own towels with them, and keeping their sixpences in their pockets: among them, of course, was the Rev. Decimus Green. Being somewhat delicate, and having a good deal of indoor work to do, he had lately possessed himself of a horse, in which he took much pride and pleasure. It was a handsome, well-bred mare, but exceedingly self-willed; and our curate, although a tolerable rider, was not quite the man to subdue her. She was somewhat tender in the legs, and salt-water had been recommended for them daily by the equine faculty. 'You may bring a horse to water,' says the proverb, 'but you can't make him drink;' and you may also bring one to the sea-beach, without getting it into the sea. Mr Green's man had been thrown in pretty deep places more than once already, and had given it as his opinion that he was engaged to be a groom, and not to be a merman. The mare, he said, was quite unmanageable in the water; and our curate, of course, said she was nothing of the kind. To prove this, moreover, he determined to ride the mare in himself. She was to be brought to him while he was bathing, which was not very early in the morning; and then, whether he stuck on her or not in the sea, it would be but of little consequence. Myself and several other friends were present upon the first occasion, curious to see whether the trial or the curate would come off. The animal was led willingly enough to the sands, and suffered her master—who, however, had to swim in and land for that purpose—to mount her unresistingly; but her complaisance extended no further. Now with her fore-feet planted resolutely on the beach, she protested with her hind-legs against moving seaward, and now rampant upon these hind-legs, she spurred furiously at ocean with her remaining two; but the Rev. Decimus Green sat her like a centaur, or as if he had been fastened on Mazeppawise with cords or cobbler's wax. At length, putting her head right for the waves, he called out to the groom to give her the whip; the order was obeyed by a most tremendous cut with a hunting-thong. Griselda—that was the docile creature's name—gave one terrific bound into the air, turned short about almost before she touched ground again, and flew, with the unfortunate unclothed Decimus upon her, straight back for her stable in the High Street. The poor fellow had no time to throw himself off: past the beach where the ladies were sitting and knitting; by the post-office, where the mail had just come in, and the crowd were inquiring for letters; through the little square, where the market-women were bargaining with the fashionables; by the squire's lawn, where Mrs Broadland and the Miss Broadlands were gardening after breakfast: by the National School, just emptying its throng of pupils and amateur teachers; and so to his own stable-door, where the sagacious Griselda stopped. This is what I hear from other sources. I never saw Decimus Green from that hour to this, nor has he since then been seen by mortal Little Biddlebrighamer. For the remainder of that day, he shut himself up in his own house, and departed from us, with his mother, under cover of the ensuing night, for ever. He derived, or seemed to derive, no comfort from my written suggestion that the thing was, after all, not so unusual, or had been done before at least, for a good purpose, by Lady Godiva. 'Never,' he writes, 'never can I look that congregation in the face again.'

This was the last but one of our curates at Little Biddlebrigham; and a delicacy, which I trust will be appreciated, causes me to postpone for a while any description of our present one.

A GLANCE AT THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.

TAKING the distinguished botanist Schleiden for our guide, we will make a hasty survey of the world of plants, and note a few of the wonders to be found there.

Since the microscope has revealed the intimate structure of flower and leaf, of root and stem, which without it was as impenetrably veiled from our eyes as a remote star in the Milky-way without the telescope; and chemistry, analysing, weighing, measuring, has lent its aid to investigate the substance out of which these are formed, botany has taken a stride upwards in the scale of the sciences—has become, in fact, physiological instead of merely systematic.

On old damp walls and palings, and stagnant water, we often find a delicate bright green velvety coat. 'This is the first beginning of vegetation. It is composed of small spherical cells filled with sap, colourless granules, and chlorophyll or leaf-green.' The noble forest tree, the delicately shaped and tinted flower, is but an assemblage of such cells: each cell complete in all its functions, a little independent organism, imbibing and assimilating nutriment—absorbing and excreting; the vitality of the whole plant being only the sum of all these minute vitalities. Fresh layers are continually deposited on the cell-walls, but 'the new layer is never a similar entire membrane.' Sometimes it is perforated all over with little chinks, or with long slits; sometimes it is a network, or winds round in a spiral band, or forms distinct rings. Some cells have the power of forming new cells within them, when the nutrient matter accumulates up to a certain point, and then the mother-cell gradually disappears. How the endless variety of form, and texture, and colour are produced by means apparently so simple and monotonous, we shall better understand if we consider that the shape and grouping of the cells is modified in a thousand different ways: sometimes elongated and pressed close together laterally, so as to form fibres, as in the wood and bass-cells—the latter being those flexible threads we weave into textile fabrics; sometimes they become cylindrical, or star-shaped, or prisms. Add to this, the varying of the minute particles and fluids deposited within the cells, colouring matter of every hue, all the nutritious substances the vegetable kingdom yields to man—the caseine, gluten, fibrine, starch, sugar—all are manufactured in these wondrous little cells. And out of what?

Mediately or immediately, man is wholly dependent on vegetable products; his mutton and beef are made of the sweet grass, the turnip, the mangel. His bread, his sugar, all his drinks, the plant furnishes him with. Out of what does it make so bountiful a provision? Out of earth, air, and water; but chiefly out of air.

Our atmosphere is composed of about four-fifths of nitrogen, one-fifth of oxygen, $\frac{1}{1000}$ of carbonic acid, and a small but at present unknown proportion of ammonia. Besides this, it takes up variable quantities of foreign matter; watery vapours, large additions to its stock of carbonic acid, and ammonia, emitted by soils redolent with decaying organic substances, &c. When we say that the plant derives its chief nourishment from the air, it is natural to conclude that the process is a direct one; that those parts, leaf, stem, flowers, which come in contact with the air, are furnished with the means of appropriating the supplies deposited there. But this is by no means the case; all, or at least 99 per cent. of all the plant assimilates reaches it through the roots; evaporation and excretion are carried on by means of leaf and stem, but

through the root alone it is fed. The soil absorbs the gases and vapours of the air, and conveys them to the roots of the plant; and one of the main differences between a productive and a barren soil, is the degree in which it possesses this absorbent and assimilative nature. Humus, which is decayed organic matter, or, as we commonly call it, manure, possesses it in the highest degree of all; it incessantly imbibes the watery vapours and ammonia out of the atmosphere. Clay comes next. Science says, therefore, a soil liberally supplied with these two substances ought to be especially fertile. Practical experience says it is so.

Very curious and difficult calculations have been made to ascertain what portion of all the water supplied to the soil by atmospheric precipitation—rain, snow, hail, and dew—is left to vegetation, after the streams, springs, and rivers have taken their share. The result of these experiments and calculations is to prove that at least one-third is carried by the great rivers to the sea, and the residue is further diminished by the evaporation from the ground heat causes. Another series of careful experiments has been instituted to discover what quantity of water a plant consumes. A sunflower absorbs 22 ounces of water daily; an acre of them, therefore, allowing each plant four square feet of ground, would require 1,826,706 pounds in the four summer months; an acre of cabbages, more than 5,000,000; and of hops, 7,000,000 pounds. In England, the average amount of rain that falls on an acre in summer does not much exceed 2,000,000 pounds, and of this vegetation does not get perhaps a quarter. Now, we see why the capacity of a soil for absorbing watery vapour is one of its most important characteristics.

Does it occur to the reader as an anomalous thing that bog-soil, which abounds both in humus and in water, produces only the most useless formless plants: sedges, rushes, rank grasses, to which the farmer gives the opprobrious name of sour pasture? The explanation of this phenomenon compels us to take account of what earth, as well as air and water, yields for vegetable sustenance. When fire consumes a thing, its organic constituents return into the atmosphere, whence they were originally drawn. The residue, the ashes, are the inorganic constituents—that which mother Earth has supplied. Combustion dissolves their union, and enables the chemist to analyse. The ashes of plants consist of lime, phosphorus, magnesia, silex, alkaline salts, in varying proportions. These are conveyed into the little cells of the living plant in the water it takes up. Deposited in the cell-walls, they cause endless modifications of hardness, brittleness, tenuity, &c. 'The slender stalk of the wheat could not lift itself to ripen its grain in the sun's rays unless the soil furnished it with silex, through which its cells acquire that solidity necessary to enable it to maintain an erect position.' The deficiency in bog-soil is occasioned by the redundancy of water dissolving and carrying off these invaluable salts and earths; while, on the other hand, it is beginning to be believed that the chief developments and transformations which culture effects—varieties that become stable in the course of time, gradually passing into sub-species—are due to these inorganic elements. Wherever a soil is rich in the peculiar salts or earths prevailing in the ashes of any given plant, that plant will gradually alter its nature and aspect. The little dry woody stem of the wild carrot will turn into a sweet juicy vegetable, weighing five or six pounds. The thin-branched flowering stem, with green bitter buds of the wild cauliflower, become the soft, succulent, snow-white head that makes its appearance upon our tables. The dry stony nature of the soil—looking as if it were only fit to mend the roads—that produces the fine Burgundian grape, is a strong instance of the fertilising power possessed by certain earths.

Botany yields a liberal quota to 'the fairy tales of science'—true 'tales,' that make the wildest or the most grotesque creations of fancy look timid and commonplace.

The traveller in South America is haunted at every turn with some one or other of the four hundred species of the cactus tribe. Sporting with ugliness, delighting in the quaintest variations of it, they constantly arrest his attention by their entire unlikeness to all other vegetable forms. Without leaves, mostly without branches, their dull green, dropsical-looking stems, pinched in here, bulging out there, yet bedecked with glorious flowers, rise often to the height of thirty or forty feet. There is the hedgehog cactus, a small round prickly ball; and the old-man cactus, with tufts of venerable-looking gray hair. There is the thin, whip-like serpent cactus, a parasite which climbs from bough to bough; and the torch-thistle cactus, rising in a round column, mostly branchless, but occasionally ramified in the strangest way, just like a clumsy gigantic candelabra, forty feet high. Sometimes the old dead stems remain standing erect, white and ghostly among the living stems, after the green fleshy rind is decayed. The benighted traveller thankfully avail himself of them, in that scantily wooded region, to make a fire or burn as a torch—hence the name—in the dark tropical nights. There are melon-shaped cacti, and some that look in the distance like reposing Indians, but on near inspection prove low shapeless heaps of a cactus that is thickly set with yellowish red spines. Though growing for the most part under the burning rays of a vertical sun, on dry sand nearly devoid of vegetable mould, and beneath a sky that for three-quarters of the year yields them not one drop of rain, they are tumid with a watery acid juice of inestimable value to the parched traveller. Even the wild ass, cautiously stripping off the dangerous spines with his hoof, knows how to help himself to a delicious draught when traversing the desolate steppes. The physicians of America make use of it in various ways. The thick leathery cuticle with which the cactus is covered prevents evaporation, and enables them to hoard the scantily supplied moisture; and they are further assisted in this by that absence of leaves which characterises nearly all the species; for it is through the leaves that plants chiefly evaporate their surplus moisture. Another peculiarity is the abundance of beautiful little crystals of oxalate of lime deposited in the cells of all the cactaceæ. Some species contain no less than 85 per cent. of it. Nearly all produce small but palatable fruits—a sort of tropical gooseberries and currants. The wood of the torch-thistle is so firm, though light, as to be available for beams and posts; and if we add that the invaluable little cochineal insect inhabits and feeds upon the cactus only, and that the spines of one kind are so dangerous that even buffaloes are killed by the inflammation following a wound from one, we shall have enumerated all that is most important concerning them.

There is a little plant with which every school-boy is familiar, the spurge or wolf's-milk, in the efficacy of whose milky juice to cure warts he has great faith. This juice, or milk-sap, as it is called, occurs in many different families of plants, increasing in number as we approach the tropics. Its properties vary from the most useful and nutritious down to the deadliest poison. All the plants possessing it are distinguished by a peculiar anatomical structure. In the bark and in the pith are long, curved, and branched tubes, not unlike the veins of animals containing this thick juice, which is generally milk-white; but there are yellow, red, and even blue milk-saps. It consists, like animal milk, of an albuminous fluid with small globules floating in it. All milk-saps contain more or less caoutchouc, but only beneath a tropical sun do those qualities

that make it so invaluable to man perfect themselves. Here, even in hot-houses, it more resembles the birdlime obtained from our misletoes. If the sap is left to stand, the caoutchouc globules rise to the top and coalesce exactly in the same way the butter globules (or cream) do in milk. The list is a long and interesting one both of useful and of noxious milk-saps. The cow-tree furnishes the Cingalese with a sweet and pleasant drink, which he uses exactly as we do milk. In Brazil there is a spurge whose milk, when flowing forth from the stem in the dark hot summer nights, emits a bright phosphoric light. The root of the yucca or manioc plant blends in close union the most wholesome nourishment and potent poison; and the process of dissolving this union and turning each to its appropriate purpose, is a very curious one. The Indian pounds the roots to a thick pulp with a wooden club in the hollowed trunk of a tree, ties it up in a tight bundle with a stone attached to the bottom, and hangs it up so that the weight of the stone squeezes out the milk-sap. The pulp is further freed from the volatile poison contained in it by exposure to heat, then powdered between two stones. And this is the celebrated cassava meal, so important an article of diet in South America. After the Indian has poisoned his arrows with the sap thus pressed out, it is set to stand for a considerable time; and the fine white powder deposited by it is—tapioca.

Strychnine and brucine, two of the most active vegetable poisons, occur in other milk-saps; and there is a tree—the manchineel—which infects with poison the very rain-drops that pass over its leaves, to such a degree, that the luckless traveller who takes shelter beneath, speedily finds himself covered with blisters and ulcers. The natives avoid it with as superstitious an awe as if it were the fabled upas-tree of Java; and apropos of the upas-tree, that venerable tale which blends three real but separate things into one fictitious whole, it comes in our way to be explained here, because one of the three facts jumbled up together, is the existence of a tree from the milk-sap of the roots of which the upas radia or sovereign poison is concocted. A tiny arrow dipped in this, and blown through a hollow reed, 'makes the tiger tremble, stand motionless a minute, then fall as though seized with vertigo, and die in brief but violent convulsions.' In that island of beauty, fertility, and horror, grow gorgeous flowers whose dimensions are reckoned by feet instead of fractions of an inch—the Lianes, Paullinias, and Rafflesias lilies. True, primeval forests open in majestic aisles, and the bare hundred-foot-long stems of the lianes coil about and stretch from tree to tree like the rigging of a ship. The antiar, with tall, smooth, slender stem, sixty or eighty feet high, crowned by a circlet of glossy leaves, pours forth from its easily wounded bark, like the manchineel, a sap that causes blisters and ulcers to him who heedlessly touches it. Apes chatter among the boughs, and pelt the traveller with fruit. The melancholy orang-outang wanders gravely about leaning on his staff. The awful mountains send out a fiery molten flood; and lower down, mud-volcanoes break out suddenly without fire or light, swallowing up in filth fertile valleys with all their men and oxen. There are streams that petrify the neighbouring trees; springs white with sulphur; little cones of gypsum spouting unceasingly hot or cold water; and, above all, there is a narrow flat valley, nearly bare of vegetation, where the ground is strewn with the skeletons of all kinds of animals: the tiger and his prey side by side, overtaken by their common foe, death; the vulture in search of carrion, turned to carrion himself; dead beetles, dead ants lying in heaps. Man only can traverse unharmed this valley of the shadow of death, because his erect posture raises him above the fatal exhalations of carbonic acid gas, which, being heavy,

diffuse themselves slowly, and cause death by asphyxia to all near the surface of the soil. It is the same gas as in the celebrated Grotto del Cane at Naples, and in the vapour caverns of Prymont. And now we have the three terrible phenomena which led to the belief in a tree whose very shadow was deadly, and from its boughs the birds that settled dropped down dead. No wonder the natives, and the equally credulous, though brave and enterprising travellers of the seventeenth century, should attribute to a tree yielding so virulent a poison—the slightest particle of it introduced into the blood by a mere scratch caused instant death—the destructive action of the intangible, and, to them, quite undiscoverable carbonic acid gas emitted from the soil. No wonder they thought it a vapour issuing from the deadly poison-tree; and to complete the wonder and terror of their tale, further endowed it with the noxious milk-sap of the tall slender antier.

But we need not travel so far from home for examples of plants yielding milk-sap of a noxious kind; our own ugly nettle is possessed of as marvelous a little apparatus for mischief as the serpent's tooth, and so similar to it in structure, that it might almost be called the vegetable serpent. A snake has in the front part of its jaw two long thin curved teeth, movable like the claws of a cat, and perforated lengthways by a minute canal, which terminates in an aperture at the point, and in a little gland containing poison at the root. When the animal bites, the resistance of the thing bitten pushes back the tooth, so that it presses into the gland, and squeezes out the venomous fluid, which runs along the little duct into the wound. The hairs on the leaf of the nettle are its teeth; each hair consists of a single cell, with a small knob at the tip, and expanded at the other end into a sac containing the irritating milk-juice. The slightest touch breaks off the brittle knob, and, as with the serpent's tooth, the pressure of the cell-canal in puncturing the hand that has rashly touched it, forces up the juice out of the sac, and discharges it into the tiny wound. The injury is but slight from our nettles; but the burning sun of the tropics, which matures the venom of the snake into a weapon of death, ripens too the poisonous sap of the nettle: the suffering from the slightest touch of one lasts many weeks, causing the arm to swell; and there is one species by which acute pain, lasting for years, is caused, and death itself often can only be avoided by amputation.

KIRKE WEBBE,

THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER XI.

It was less from lack of appetite, than as affording a respite from Webbe's blistering banter, that I declined accompanying him to the table d'hôte. I dined alone; not very heartily, to be sure; a depressing sense of helpless involvement prevented that. I was perplexed in the extreme, but it would be scarcely worth while to recite the moony meditations in which I remained plunged till evening had for some time set in, seeing that they resulted in the forlorn conviction that to boldly repudiate the absurd marriage urged by Webbe's overbearing insistence, and the tears and tenderness of Clémence, would not only break the heart of a gentle girl, whose only fault, within my knowledge, was loving too well and most unwisely, but might be in effect to pass sentence of death upon my father. My only hope, therefore, was in the girl's concurrence with the delaying suggestion embodied in my note, the answer to which it was full time I should seek.

Voices in loud altercation caused me to pause as I was passing forth, and I looked in for a moment at the guests assembled round the table d'hôte. There were

several officers of the line and national guard there; amongst them the warlike bootmaker. The company appeared to be in a state of considerable excitement. Sicard was upon his legs, nearly opposite Webbe, declaiming with lively gesticulation upon Bonapartism and Bourbon politics in general, as well as I could make out, and with especial and malignant reference, it seemed, by the fixed direction of his flaming face and eyes, to M. Jacques Le Gros. The privateer captain, whose back was towards me, had, I supposed, presumed to differ in opinion from the shop-keeping warrior; but feeling quite satisfied that Webbe was able to hold his own against a regiment of wordy assailants, I went on my dismal way to the Rue Dupetit Thouars.

Truly a dismal way! A cold, driving rain was falling; and dirty, dingy St Malo, darkly visible by the dull light of lanterns swung on ropes across the narrow streets, looked dirtier and dingier than ever. I had no umbrella, and as the distance was not very great, preferred hastening on to returning for one. It thus happened, that butting blindly ahead against the wind and rain with my hat pulled down over my eyes, I missed the right turning; and after splashing along for more than the time that should have brought me near Madame de Bonneville's magasin, I found myself nowhere that I knew of, or could immediately ascertain, the streets being completely deserted. I made several starts in directions which I fancied should lead to the Rue Dupetit Thouars, without result, till I ran against an *autorité*, as he came sharply round a corner. The collision was violent, and a little irritated the gendarme.

'*Sacre bleu!*' he exclaimed; 'who is this?' To which I replied by asking him how far off and where the Rue Dupetit Thouars might be.

'How far off? Where? At least a quarter of an hour off, if you walk fast. Go to the top of this alley; then turn to the right, traverse the *Place*, ascend the Rue St Jean, and inquire again.'

The cocked-hatted functionary, who was apparently bound upon pressing business, stayed no further parley. I went off, as directed, at the top of my speed, and was traversing the *Place*, when I was suddenly brought to a stand-still by a glimpse of two women as they rapidly crossed over at some distance from me, and disappeared up a narrow street. One of them, there could be no doubt, was Fanchette: the face of the other, as I for a moment caught it by the light of a lamp close to which she passed, seemed to be that of the fierce Frenchwoman I had once seen in the Isle of Wight—of Louise Féron, *alias* Madame de Bonneville!

So sure was I of this, that I impulsively called out and ran towards the women; with what intent, had I come up with them, would have puzzled me to say; when, having lost sight of the chase, and hot, steaming with excitement and exertion, I stopped to take breath and consider what I was to do, or had purposed doing. I didn't know at all. Probably a vague desire to cut in some way or other the Gordian-knot by which I was cumshod and hampered, had caused the inconsiderate pursuit. As the reader already knows, I was ever rash and headlong. Should I meet and be recognised by Madame de Bonneville, our fine scheme would of course fall to pieces at once, not to speak or think of other correlative possibilities. And might not her inopportune return to St Malo have the same result? Certainly it might, and it behoved me therefore to be trebly wary and circumspect; and first of all, to ascertain beyond doubt that I had not been mistaken—that Fanchette's woman-companion was really Louise Féron.

This step in mental demonstration was nearly *pari passu* with that, I having quickly resumed walking, which brought me to the corner of a street I knew, by

the *épicer's* shop on the opposite side, to be the Rue Dupetit Thouars. Fanchette and Madame de Bonneville—if Madame de Bonneville it was that I had seen—did not, it instantly occurred to me, turn down, or, more properly, up that street. They had gone on in a straight direction. Most likely, then, fancy had fooled me. Besides, when one came to think of it seriously, was it likely that a person just arrived at home after a long, fatiguing journey by Diligence, would go owling about the town at such a time and in such weather? The notion was absurd. I might therefore venture, at all events, to call at the magasin, and end all misgivings upon the subject. I saw by the faint light cast into the dark street from the window, that it was still open, and in a few minutes, after peering in, and seeing only the two workwomen sewing away as usual at the further end, I opened the door and walked in.

'Is Madame de Bonneville within?' I asked.

'Madame de Bonneville!' was the reply in a tone of surprise. 'Mademoiselle, no doubt, monsieur means,' added the woman with a smile. 'Yes.'

'Madame is not then returned from Paris, as I thought she might have been?'

'No, monsieur. I do not think she is expected for several days.'

I had been mistaken. There could be no longer question of it, and I passed on with a more assured step.

Clémence received me with a kind of gracious, pensive ceremony. She was alone, nicely dressed, and there was positive enchantment in her blushing smile, and the trembling tears which, as seen by the lamp-light, kindled her sweet blue eyes with a penetrating, softened lustre. 'After all,' thought I, as I raised the tips of her fingers to my lips and returned her low-toned, agitated greeting—'After all, since it is my destiny to be wedded in my own despite, Fate might have served me a scurvier trick—have mated me with a much less agreeable partner. I shall console myself after a while; never fear. Time will do more than reconcile me to a young and charming wife, whose disinterested devotedness would excite a grateful tenderness in the coldest, most obdurate of human hearts.'

'You are wet, mon ami,' said Clémence, without withdrawing her hand, which trembled very much, from mine. 'Shall you not take cold?'

'O, dear no, mademoiselle. Water to us amphibious islanders is a kind of second atmosphere.'

The girl sighed, blushed, drooped her sad eyes, and resented herself upon the *canapé*. Evidently her thoughts were painfully preoccupied. Female instinct had, it was plain, detected the false pretence of my note, and she felt, sweet, sensitive child, that I did not love, though I might esteem, respect, even admire her. I would have given much to have been able to chase away that green and yellow melancholy by fervid words—true words I doubted not in a future though not present sense—that might deceive her into happiness. Just then, however, I could not, had my life depended upon doing so, I felt so down-in-the-mouth, so altogether damp, limpid, uncomfortable.

I broke an embarrassing pause by asking if Fanchette was at home.

'No, mon ami: she wished to go out, rude as the night is; I also,' added the maiden looking up and regarding me with a penetrating, puzzling look—'I also was desirous she should be away, in order that at this decisive epoch in our lives we might be secure from interruption.'

'You reason with judgment, with delicacy, mademoiselle, under all circumstances,' said I, hardly knowing in truth what I did say, so much had the young woman's peculiar look disconcerted me. I recognised in it a world of tenderness and purity; but, as it seemed to me, a compassionate tenderness,

such as I, under the circumstances, had I been savage enough, might have expressed towards her.

Again a most embarrassing silence, which I put an end to by plunging desperately in *media res*.

'You have read the note, mademoiselle, which I had the honour of placing in your hands to-day?'

'O yes, many times over, and believe me, mon ami, with many bitter, bitter tears! I am very young; entirely without experience of the world; still I feel, acutely feel the cruel grief which must ever wring the heart of one whose devotion is met with the chilling repulse of at best a sorrowing, sympathising compassion—a regretful pity, which'—

'Dear Clémence!' I exclaimed, starting up, and taking her passive hand in both mine. 'Be assured that'—

'Do not persist, mon ami,' interrupted the sobbing girl. 'Captain Webbe has been your faithful, eloquent interpreter. Me, with all his practised acuteness, he has not so well understood. It is true, however, that I agree with him in his appreciation of the manifold advantages that will be derived from our marriage. May I not, dear friend, cast aside at this supreme moment the affectations of girlhood, and speak out frankly, honestly, as all honest human souls should to each other? Yes, I fully appreciate the desirableness, the indispensability of this marriage: that it will not only insure justice, but temper that justice with mercy. I yield to that paramount consideration; and to-morrow, since it must be so, I will pledge you my faith at the altar of God—a faith, mon ami, which you need not doubt will be kept as sacred as if our hearts beat perfectly in unison with each other. To-morrow be it then, monsieur; and if'—

'Permettez, mademoiselle,' I exclaimed, bewilderedly interrupting a proposal, equivalent, as interpreted by the young lady's look and tone of heroic self-sacrifice, to an offer on her part to be chopped into little bits at the command of cruel, imperious duty—'Permit me, mademoiselle, to say that I would not for the wealth of worlds take advantage of the peculiar, the extremely delicate circumstances in which you are now placed, and which cannot but influence a decision of lifelong consequences. It would be unpardonable to do so. Once restored to your true home—able to appreciate the vast change in your social position—within reach of maternal counsels, you will better'—

'Ah, my poor friend,' interrupted Clémence, with perplexing graciousness; 'Captain Webbe has revealed to me that generous nature; for my sake, the wound, which would nevertheless continue to bleed and fester inwardly. I may not selfishly accept that sacrifice. The brilliant future of which you speak, would not, if this moment realised, change or colour my sentiments in the faintest degree. It is true that, at first, I did not, as it were, feel the beatings of my own simple girl's heart amidst the throbbings of anticipative pride and exultation; and this is a remorse to me, since, had it not been so, the fancy excited by my portrait would not probably have grown to a passion which, be assured, though I will not pretend I can at present return, commands my liveliest sympathy, and will hereafter, I do not doubt—neither must you, dear friend—couple my warmest affections.'

'Plait-il?' said I, using a French idiom which it is impossible to precisely translate, but expressive, in this instance, of unbounded mystification and astonishment. 'Plait-il?'

Another explanatory word or two will be necessary before proceeding further with this confounding colloquy. I had risen, as previously stated, and taken the soft little hand of Mademoiselle Clémence in both mine. I continued so to hold it, and being a tall fellow benignly bending over a disconsolate damsel seated upon a French *canapé* or sofa, very low upon the feet,

the musical low murmur, moreover, of the stream of eloquence with which I was favoured, obliging me to place my ear as close as politeness permitted to the sweet lips through which it welled, my upright legs and sharply inclined body formed two sides of an irregular square, of which the salient angle was towards the door leading from the magasin. The reader will now have realised my position *vis-à-vis* the amiable Clémence and the door opening into the shop, when uttering the interrogative exclamation of 'Plait-il?'

'True,' resumed the damsel, in continuation rather than reply—'true, you have a right to be surprised that one so inferior in position and other social advantages, should have forestalled you in the affections of one whom a combination of romantic circumstances has invested, in your partial eyes, with imaginary charms; but in excuse, remember, dear William, how true, how devoted he was to me when I was in reality but little better than a poor *ouvrière*, with no prospect beyond—
— Ha! Ciel!'

Simultaneous, and mingling with the young lady's abrupt exclamation, was a sudden rush of feet, furious cries of 'Scélérat!' 'Coquin!' 'Sacré Tonnerre!' and the application of the toe of a boot to the seat of my pale-blue pants—the before-mentioned salient angle—so vigorously administered, as to pitch me into the arms of the screaming girl in the most indecorous manner.

My comprehension of it all was as instantaneous as the uproar and assault. I recognised by a flash of thought that it was the 'true,' 'devoted' Jacques Sicard who had 'forestalled' me in the affections, and kicked me into the lap of a damsel, who, I had been gulled into believing, was pining to death with unrequited love for my precious, booby self. All this, I say, with the correlatives, rushed in a moment with my flaming blood to the tips of my ears and fingers, and I sprang round with the rage and yell of a tiger.

The white wrath, under such circumstances, of an athletic young man, must have had a somewhat terrifying aspect; certainly it at once took the bounce out of Master Sicard, who was, I saw, accompanied by a 'National' officer, with whom I had a slight speaking acquaintance. The bootmaker leaped backwards with a cry of alarm, and whipping out his sword, poked at, whilst he dodged me round a table. I had no weapon, not even a stick, nothing but my bare hands, with which I could not reach him; no missile, but the brass lamp, was available, and seizing that, I hurled it, after one whirl round my own head, with all the strength that rage supplied, at Sicard's cranium. The fellow turned away his face avoidingly, and the blow, which must else have descended upon his brow or temple, struck the back part of his skull, and he fell upon the floor as if struck down by a pole-axe.

A torrent of blood gushed from the wound, and I thought I had killed the unfortunate bootmaker. So did Clémence, whose agonising grief as she clasped the insensible Jacques in her arms, and called upon all the saints in heaven to save him, was decisive of the hold he had obtained upon her heart; and although I had not felt, did not feel, the slightest love, in its conventional meaning, for the girl, I could at that moment have torn him to pieces—so fierce, so demon-like, under certain conditions, is outraged personal vanity.

'Monsieur cannot go away for the present,' said my acquaintance, the officer of the national guard, mistaking a movement of irritability excited by the girl's wild ravings.

'I have no desire to go away,' I replied. 'The insolent fool, as you cannot but bear witness, brought the misfortune upon himself.'

'I do not say the contrary,' said the officer. 'Still, monsieur, justice must take legal cognizance of the affair before you can be free to depart.'

'That is but reasonable,' I said; and seating myself, I moodily awaited the termination of the unfortunate business.

The shopwomen had run in with lights, lifted Sicard from the floor, placed him upon the canapé, and sent off immediately for a surgeon. The coming of that gentleman was not long delayed; and after carefully examining and probing the wound, he exclaimed:

'Reassure yourselves, my friends; the wound is nothing—that is to say, it is not in the least dangerous. Maitre Sicard is only stunned, and will be well as ever to-morrow, I answer for it.'

This was an immense relief to me—ininitely more so to Clémence, as her rapturous sobs abundantly testified. 'Upon my word,' thought I, 'the favour that magnanimous damsel proposed conferring upon me to-morrow morning—her hand, whilst her heart was that blustering bootmaker's—was a highly flattering one. By — But swearing is of no use. Yet that ever Mrs Waller's daughter should be enamoured of a vulgar cordwainer! Still, what can be said? It is proverbial that misfortune brings strange bedfellows together.'

'There is nothing, then, to detain me here any longer,' said I.

'Nothing whatever, monsieur, that I am aware of,' replied the surgeon.

'Maitre Sicard,' observed the officer, who left the house with me, 'is a really good fellow at bottom, but at the same time, it must be admitted, rash in temper, which has also been unusually tried this evening. He had already crossed swords with your relative, Monsieur Jacques Le Gros, before leaving the Hôtel de l'Empire.'

'Indeed! Pray, how happened that?'

'They had a dispute at the table d'hôte, and Sicard, who had been drinking freely, insulted and challenged your uncle. Bah! It was over in a twinkling. Monsieur Le Gros, a *lapin*, as one can easily see, borrowed my sword, and that of poor Sicard was sent flying out of his hand the instant the blades touched each other. Your relative,' added the officer, 'has, it must be confessed, a tongue which stabs like a poniard, and I was not surprised at poor Sicard's rage at finding himself not only so easily disarmed, but mocked at over the market.'

'He should bear himself more discreetly, if he would avoid such hazards.'

'It is true. Cupid, at all events, favours him, if Mars does not. The sentiments of Mademoiselle Clémence towards him are no longer doubtful.'

'Possibly. I think my road lies in this direction, does it not?'

'To the Hôtel de l'Empire?—Yes; but the distance is considerable, and I have thoughtlessly brought you out of your way.'

'I do not mind that, now that the rain has ceased. Good-night, monsieur.'

'Au plaisir, Monsieur Jean Le Gros.'

I walked hastily on, but, absorbed in thought, missed the right direction for the second time that evening. Providentially so, a superstitious person would say, for again I caught sight of Fanchette with her strapping woman companion—and—yes—my eyes did not deceive me, Captain Webbe had joined them! They crossed the street a considerable way ahead, and walked swiftly from me; I followed with eager yet cautious steps; it was, I felt forebodingly, to be a night of strange revelations.

Captain Webbe and his two associates stopped before a respectable *cabaret*, and presently went in. I crossed to the opposite side for the purpose of reconnoitring before attempting a closer approach. In a few minutes there was a light in one of the rooms on the first floor, into which the three new-comers, as I could see by

their shadows on the blinds, were presently ushered. They took seats close to each other, and were about, I doubted not, to enter upon a conference, at which it was highly desirable I should make one, unseen by the speakers.

It might be managed, I thought; and crossing over, I entered the lower, or, as we should say, the bar-room of the cabaret, and called for a glass of liqueur.

'Can I speak privately with you for a minute?' said I, addressing the garçon, who brought an order for wine and oysters from the party in the first floor.

'Certainly, monsieur,' replied the man readily, though with some surprise. 'This way, if you please.'

The negotiation, marvellously quickened by the transfer of two Napoleons from my purse to that of the garçon's, resulted favourably, and I was placed without loss of time in a dark closet close to the part of the room where he proposed laying the supper; and the partition between being of thin wood-panelling, I could hear pretty distinctly for a time all that passed, subdued as was the tone in which Webbe and his companions conversed.

First, I discovered that Madame de Bonneville had been no further off than Dol all the while, there awaiting in ambush, as it were, the fruition of the plot concocted by her and the privateer captain, with the active connivance of Fanchette. The precise bearing or purpose of that plot was not so easily gathered from the scraps of discourse relating thereto. Madame's sudden arrival at St Malo was, I also found, prompted by a misgiving as to Webbe's fidelity, of which she thought to more thoroughly assure herself by a personal interview before he went away.

'So many promising schemes,' said Louisa Féron, in English—Fanchette having, I supposed, been only partially admitted to the conspirators' confidence—'So many promising schemes for utilising the bold deed you and I carried through fifteen years ago, have been wrecked almost as soon as launched, that my anxiety—my suspicious anxiety, if you will—for the success of this last one, is quite excusable. It is full time, too, that the business should be brought to a conclusion. The state of my affairs, and of yours too, captain, demand its speedy settlement.'

'That settlement—a marriage-settlement,' replied Webbe, 'will, I repeat to you for the hundredth time, come off before forty-eight hours have passed away.'

'That is everything. If Clémence be once married to young Linwood, I shall have taken hostages of fortune.'

'No doubt of it: and Clémence will be a fortunate girl too. Linwood, though easily led by the nose as asses are, is a trump of a young fellow, as young fellows go.'

'He will be rich—that is the main consideration. And, dites-donc, Monsieur le Capitaine,' added the woman in French, 'what is all that I read in the newspapers of your son, who had slain one Le Moine, being detected in the disguise of an American naval officer at a banquet given at Avranches in honour of Captain Jules Renaudin?'

'That is a droll story,' said Webbe, 'which I will relate to you after we have finished the oysters.'

Their conversation during the consumption of the said oysters referred to matters of no interest to me; and supper done, they removed further off, so that I could only hear what was said when their voices were unusually raised. I knew by the frequent occurrence of the names of Linwood, Le Moine, Harry, and, as I fancied more than once, that of Maria Wilson, that Webbe was relating my adventures, no doubt with his usual ad libitum variations. The narrative greatly amused his auditors, and the *entente cordiale* appeared to be re-established between the mutually mistrustful confederates.

Webbe rose to go, and then madame, who intended

sleeping at the cabaret and returning to Dol on the following morning, said with absolute tone and emphasis:

'Remember, Captain Webbe, that I will not be juggled with; that you cannot play your own game out successfully without first winning mine. This marriage first, or, by all that is sacred or infernal, I'—

'Madame, your suspicions are absurd, childish,' interrupted Webbe. 'Do you suppose I need to be reminded that we are both embarked in the same boat, and must float or founder together?'

'Well, I merely remind you that I will not be fooled, happen what may. And now, before you go, as to'—

I did not catch the remainder of the sentence; and at the end of another ten minutes' low-toned dialogue, of which I could hear a confused murmur only, Webbe and Fanchette left the house: I did the same soon afterwards, reaching the Hôtel de l'Empire a few minutes before Webbe.

'THEY MANAGE THESE THINGS BETTER IN FRANCE.'

THIS is almost a proverb, and applicable to many things on this side of the Channel: in none is it more true than in that of the Nail-manufacture.

As long as nails and tacks were made by hammers alone, things were pretty much on an equality. Thousands of anvils resounded night and day in smoky Brummagem, at which men, women, and boys toiled with large hammers, or with small, producing every variety of work, from the tiny 'twenty penny' and upwards, down to the little 'saddler's tack,' so minute and beautifully finished that it was a real marvel of female handicraft. Now, nearly all this is the work of the steam-engine; and in both countries, the anvil with its clinking sound is, so far as nails are concerned, silent for ever.

It is true that so much of our work here in England is performed with soft wood, in which it makes but little difference which end of the nail goes foremost, that the bits of sheet-iron cut off from the edge of a sheet by machinery, and which have no points, and often no heads, may answer the purpose well enough. Thus, in nailing down the floor of a room to the joists, and in similar rough work, these clumsy nails may answer the purpose; but if it be desired to clench such nails, or to use them in putting together anything of hard wood, or of slender dimensions, it will be found that they are vastly inferior to the old sorts, or to the wire-nails so extensively used on the continent. The great fault of all nails cut by machines from sheet-iron, is this one of extreme brittleness; but it is also greatly against making neat work when the bluntness of the point, if it comes through the timber, breaks away a large splinter of the wood, just as a bullet would do.

The foreign nails, on the contrary, are beautiful specimens of their kind. Being made of bright wire, cut into lengths, pointed, and headed in the same machine, they can be had of any length or thickness desired.

Every one at all accustomed, even as an amateur, like myself, to the workshop, will easily know that the varieties of nail required for different work and different woods are almost endless. Thus, the 'pointes de Paris' may be had of a given thickness, and four or five various lengths: the same wire will be seen as a short *stump*, or as a long 'brad,' requiring a nice hand to guide it straight to its resting-place. The chief advantage of these 'wire-brads' is, that they hardly ever split even the most difficult sorts of wood. Avoiding altogether the wedge shape of the

other nails, except within the narrow limits of the actual point, they confine the space within which the wood might be disposed to give way, to a length represented by that of the point itself. This, in a nail an inch long, would not exceed, probably, a twentieth part of the whole, while the remaining nineteen parts are exerting their natural tenacity in resistance. It seems puzzling why they have not been adopted in England. The principle of the machinery employed in manufacturing them is the same as that used for the solid-headed pins, which have so completely superseded the old form; but to which of the two nations the honour of the discovery belongs, is a question I am not competent to decide.

It may interest some of my brother amateur-mechanics to hear that these wire-brads may be manufactured at home, and at a very cheap rate, quite sufficiently well for all ordinary purposes. The mode of doing this is to take a coil of wire of the proper thickness, and let an assistant supply it as required to a small iron anvil set on a block or bench. Suppose nails an inch long are needed, I take a very cheap 'cold chisel'—that is, a steel chisel of hard temper—and cut the wire with it at an inch from the end, but holding the chisel as much as possible in a slanting direction. This forms two sloping points, and a cut straight across being given at the proper distance, two nails are thus formed. They sometimes require to be gone over with the hammer afterwards, and the points arranged a little; but in rough work, I have used vast quantities of them just as they were after the chisel. As they have no heads, I always turn down a small portion of the nail upon the wood. This makes an excellent bond for boxes, packing-cases, and all sorts of ordinary work, where the absence of a slightly head to the nail is of no consequence. So superior, in point of convenience, are these nails, that some friends of mine actually purchase all the fig-boxes they can lay their hands on, quite as much, or very nearly so, for the sake of the wire-brads they contain, as for the wood.

The change of system, so general now throughout Europe, from hand-made to machine-made nails, must have created quite a revolution in the trade, and displaced thousands of industrious hands; but I have as yet met with no statistical information on that subject.

A WET DAY AT BRIGHTON.

When London's growing dark and dull, the atmosphere with vapour rife,
So heavily consistent you might cut it with a paper knife;
When the mental air's so thick it sinks the spirits down to noodledom;
And Rotten Row is a morass, Belgravia a Boodledom;
When the head is heavy, the pulse is low, and at 'muggy' the thermometer;
And the only thing that's lively is the hand of the barometer:
When for ball or dinner, vainly, your acquaintances you beat about;
And the lamplighter and linkman are the only men you meet about;
Defiantly you rush away, and take the train to Brighton, in
The hope, by change of scene and air, the intellects of
lightening!

Bow! wow! wow!

At first, you vote the place a bore, because you haven't got about
Your room a hundred useless things you do not care a jot about;
And it isn't for a day or two you manage to think of it less;
You want the bustle of the town you had pronounced so profitless,

Till, ceasing, by degrees, to miss each habit, aim, and haunt of you.

You give up wondering how the world at home gets on for want of you;

And, imitating folks around, resolve to make the best of 'em,

Become soon as industriously idle as the rest of 'em;

And to one thought devote yourself—you'll scarcely be too bright for it—

What you'll have for dinner, and, how best, to get an appetite for it!

Bow! wow! wow!

Then out you'll stroll to see if there is any one you know, about—

You don't care who—you only want some one with whom to go about;

And chat with those amphibious men who want to go to sea with you—

A proposal you dissent from, for you know it won't agree with you;

You get your toes run over by Bath chairs, until you frown again,

And wish that man you owe a bill to would go back to town again;

On the tailors of the men you meet enjoy a quiet criticism; Or listen to the nursemaids' objurgations of their *missuses*;

And conclude with a conclusion, that you won't be long a coming to,

That Ladies' faces *do* exist that Hats are *not* becoming to!

Bow! wow! wow!

Then you fancy that at breakfast you're beginning to be great, to-day;

And ask the waiter why on earth the *Times* should be so late to-day;

Then take a canter on the Downs, on horseback if so be you dare—

You may do it, for there's room enough for nobody to see you there—

Then shudder at the gale, at night, that makes some sad hearts weep again,

And sympathetically sigh—and turn—and go to sleep again! All these are merely things of course! In these, there's nothing new to us;

It's merely change of scene and life; and much good may it do to us!

But there's something else, I think, that we must all agree together to,

Although we bring our weeds from town, we needn't bring it weather too.

Bow! wow! wow!

ALFRED WATTS.

HONOUR TO SUICIDES.

The frequency of self-murder in China is to be explained in part from the fact, that it is generally considered either as expiatory or meritorious. We find that the Censorate has lately recommended to the emperor the Memorial of a family residing in one of the metropolitan districts, praying for the bestowal of posthumous honours on a female member whose husband, a literary graduate, fell fighting against the rebels in Hupeh. Her claim to distinction consists in her inconsolable grief, as manifested by suicide (apparently by opium), for her deceased husband. The emperor expresses pity and commendation, and directs the Board of Rites to deliberate on the proper designation for the heroine. The object of the petitioners in this case is either to get authority for the erection of an honorary portal, or to procure for her tablet a place in the Hall of Worthy Women in her district, where she will be sacrificed to semi-annually by the magistrates.—*North-China Herald*.

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